



Pappageorge measure would protect Great Lakes from drilling

The Great Lakes are our greatest natural resource and we must take every precaution to protect them. In light of the recent tragedy in the Gulf, it is more important than ever that we act to ensure the health of the lakes, their ecosystems and watersheds. That is why I sponsored a resolution to help protect the health of the Great Lakes from offshore or directional drilling for oil and gas.

Senate Resolution 169 urges the inclusion in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of a ban on new oil and gas drilling beneath the Great Lakes. The agreement is a regional agreement that helped shape the recently enacted Great Lakes Basin Compact and forms the basis for a coordinated basin-wide approach to protecting the lakes.

My measure also encourages the Great Lakes Governors' Council to study and assess the impacts of gas spills from offshore Canadian drilling on the lakes. Michigan enacted a statutory ban of offshore drilling within the Great Lakes in 1982 and followed up with a ban of directional drilling in 2002. Each of the bans apply to both oil and natural gas drilling.

Currently, no state within the Great Lakes Basin has a constitutional ban in place on offshore or directional drilling beneath the lakes. Michigan, Wisconsin and New York, however, have individual bans and Ohio has an executive order in place prohibiting drilling in the lakes. All basin states are party to a non-binding agreement not to allow drilling beneath the lakes.

Other important legislation introduced in the Senate includes:

- Senate Joint Resolution Z, which proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit the drilling of oil or gas wells within the Great Lakes, beneath the bottomlands or the connecting waterways of the lakes; and
- Senate Resolution 168, which urges the Great Lakes states and the Province of Ontario to permanently ban any new oil and gas drilling beneath the Great Lakes.

Since 1913, approximately 2,200 vertical gas extraction wells have been drilled in Canada under Lake Erie. About 550 are currently active. I look forward to these urgent and vital measures taking effect. We must protect the Great Lakes and help keep them pristine for future generations to enjoy.

Sincerely,


John Pappageorge

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TEXTING BAN TAKES EFFECT JULY 1st

Remember, Michigan's ban on texting while driving takes effect July 1st. A first time offense will cost you \$100 and a second offense will cost \$200. The law bans sending, typing or reading text messages or e-mails while driving. Don't get caught texting behind the wheel!

Resolution opposes regulation of the Internet

The Michigan Senate recently took a historic step by approving a resolution officially opposing proposed regulation of the Internet by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

The Senate passed a concurrent resolution urging the federal government to encourage more innovation, investment and jobs in Michigan by not subjecting the Internet to nearly 80 year-old telephone company regulations.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 urged the president, Congress and FCC to "refrain from regulating Internet broadband services as common carrier services under Title II of the Communications Act of 1934."

Michigan has been in a difficult economy for some time now, but one of the bright spots has been the investments made in our state's telecommunications networks and the jobs which have been delivered as a result. Senate Republicans hope that the resolution resonates in Washington, D.C. and discourages Congress from hampering telecommunications growth.

SCR 41 came just weeks after the FCC chairman announced he would seek extraordinary authority to regulate broadband under Title II of the 1934 act.

Senate panel moves to place state checkbook online

Understanding that transparency in spending is vital to an effective government that is accountable to the people, the Senate Appropriations General Government Subcommittee, which I chair, approved legislation requiring state government to post spending on a free, searchable website.

Michigan taxpayers have a right to know how government is spending tax dollars, because it isn't really the state's money – it's the people's money. As Michigan continues to face budget deficits of more than a billion dollars, the public is demanding openness in government now more than ever.

Senate Bill 382 would require the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget to develop a website of state contracts with the contract description, contract amount, the funding agency, vendor name, category of goods and services as well as a link to the actual contract.

The federal government's website details more

than \$2 trillion in spending, and it cost less than \$1 million. Missouri's site is updated daily, allows visitors to search through \$20 billion in spending and was put together with existing staff and funds. It is time Michigan followed suit.

U.S. PIRG, the federation of state Public Interest Research

Groups, released a report in April evaluating how each state offers easy online access to government spending data. The study says that at least 32 states currently mandate that residents be able to access an online database of government expenditures with "checkbook-level" detail.

SB 382 was approved by the subcommittee and now heads to the full Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration.



Medicare/Medicaid Forum

Earlier this month I participated in a "Changes in Medicare/Medicaid since 2009" forum. It was a great event that helped to shed light on the intricacies of the Medicaid and Medicare programs.



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

Each year approximately 12,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for fireworks related injuries. If you're going to use fireworks while celebrating our nation's birthday, make sure to follow these safety guidelines:

- Light them in a clear area away from onlookers and houses.
- Do not try to re-light fireworks that malfunction – soak them in water.
- Even sparklers burn at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit – don't let small children use them.



Questions? Comments?

If you have any questions or comments regarding information in this newsletter, or wish to be removed from or added to the mailing list, please contact my office at the following information:

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